

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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CONTENTS OF NO. 10.

THE TWO MYSTERIES	113
SOMEWHERE	113
THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE HIDDEN LIFE	114
THE STILL HOUR	115
THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB	116
THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL:— WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH THE MOTHERS?	118
NATURAL HISTORY:— STUDYING THE BIRDS IN WINTER	120
CHILDREN'S CLASSICS:— THE GOLDEN TOUCH	121
THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN	123
THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE	124
IMPORTANT NOTICES	124

THE TWO MYSTERIES.

We know not what it is, dear, this sleep so
deep and still;
The folded hands, the awful calm, the cheek
so pale and chill;
The lids that will not lift again, though we
may call and call;
The strange, white solitude of peace that
settles over all.

We know not what it means, dear, this
desolate heart-pain;
This dread to take our daily way, and walk
in it again;
We know not to what other sphere the loved
who leave us go,
Nor why we're left to wonder still, nor why
we do not know.

But this we know: Our loved and dead, if
they should come this day—
Should come and ask us, "What is life?"—
not one of us could say.
Life is a mystery as deep as ever death
can be;
Yet oh, how dear it is to us, this life we
live and see!

Then might they say—these vanished ones
—and blessed is the thought,
"So death is sweet to us, beloved! though
we may show you naught;
We may not to the quick reveal the mystery
of death—
Ye cannot tell us, if ye would, the mystery
of breath."

The child who enters life comes not with
knowledge or intent,
So those who enter death must go as little
children sent.
Nothing is known. But I believe that God is
overhead;
And as life is to the living, so death is to the
dead.

—*Mary Mapes Dodge.*

SOMEWHERE.

How can I cease to pray for thee? Some-
where
In God's great universe thou art to-day.
Can He not reach thee with His tender
care?
Can He not hear me when for thee I pray?

What matters it to Him who holds within
The hollow of His hands all worlds, all
space,
That thou art done with earthly pain and
sin;
Somewhere within His ken, thou hast a
place!

Somewhere thou livest and hast need of
Him,
Somewhere thy soul sees higher heights to
climb,
And somewhere still there may be valleys
dim
That thou must pass to reach the hills
sublime.

Then all the more because thou canst not
hear
Poor human words of blessing, will I pray.
O true, brave heart! God bless thee where-
so'er
In His great universe thou art to-day.

—*Julia C. R. Dorr.*

THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE HIDDEN LIFE.

God has given us the "law of perfect liberty," to the end that we should use it to his service; and that liberty is never so safe as when we trust it unreservedly to him, setting self-will aside, and leaving all to him: "for we know that all things work together for good to them that love God." Self-rule will probably err. Moreover, those who choose their own path must be responsible for the consequences thereof, however serious; whereas when God rules, we need nothing but patient trust. He loves us far more than we can love ourselves, and he watches over us with more than a Father's love. Trust in him, and it is impossible for devil or man to hinder his grace.

All peace and happiness in this world depend upon unreserved self-oblation to God. If this be hearty and entire, the result will be an unfailing, ever-increasing happiness, which nothing can disturb. There is no real happiness in this life, save that which is the result of a peaceful heart. Even religious people who only half give themselves up to God, know but feebly what this peace is;—they are easily disturbed by many things, scruples, dread of God's judgments, or the changes and chances of life. But the soul which gives itself wholly and without reserve to God, is filled with his own peace; and inasmuch as we are prone to grow like that to which we are closely united, the closer we draw to our God so much the stronger shall we become. Those who cleave to the things of this world are forever tossed about with the waves and storms of uncertainty—God alone is immovable, unchangeable, and he who trusts in him will never be confounded.

Of our own strength we are equally incapable of doing good either in great works or small, but it is safest to aim at the lesser, leaving God to call us to serve him in greater things, when he may see fit. Meanwhile, little things come daily, hourly, within our reach, and they are not less calculated to set forward our growth in holiness than are the greater occasions which occur but rarely—indeed in some ways we may turn them to more profit, inasmuch as they do not war against humility, or tend to feed self-deceit. Moreover, fidelity in trifles and an earnest seeking to please God in little matters, is a test of real devotion and love. It is quite possible to perform very ordinary actions with so high an intention, as to serve God therein better than in far more important things done with a less pure intention.

Surely it needs but to meditate upon the holy household of Nazareth to realize this truth, while God's own Word tells us that "he who despiseth little things, shall fall by little and little." Let your aim be to please our dear Lord perfectly in little things, and to attain a spirit of childlike simplicity and dependence.

One great hindrance to growth in God's Love is self-love. All God's dealings with those whom he leads in the hidden paths of the spiritual life tend to root out self-love; as, on the other hand, all our difficulties and inward struggles arise from it. In proportion as self-love and self-confidence are weakened, and our will bowed to that of God, so will hindrances disappear, the internal troubles and contests which harassed the soul vanish, and it will be filled with peace and tranquillity. But it is well to bear in mind that as we advance in the spiritual life, our self-love is apt to change in character, becoming more refined and subtle, and consequently more treacherous and harder to uproot. In truth, we can only perceive this dangerous enemy by the help of God's own light, which reveals the secrets of the heart; and he only shows us our danger by degrees, giving us the means at the same time of overcoming it. Thus we seldom realize the force of self-love until God's dealings are tearing it out of our hearts; and then if we co-operate with his grace, his love will speedily fill the vacant place, until by degrees the whole soul is His only. Then, indeed, that soul realizes the promised blessing of the "pure in heart"—and "shall see God." Such a soul may suffer, but it will suffer joyfully, unresistingly, and no sufferings can take away that peace of which Jesus said, "My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

It will be profitable to review the various degrees of the spiritual life, and to trace how God deals with our self-love in each. Of course the most obvious form is a sensuous love of self, and a clinging to sensible and material pleasures. God draws his servants from these by filling them with heavenly delights and consolations, beside which earthly enjoyments grow pale and worthless. Next, self-love cleaves to these very consolations, this tangible delight and satisfactions, and then God gently withdraws external delight, without depriving the soul of peace and restfulness. But when self-love begins to rely upon this peace, then again he permits that to be troubled and the soul loses all self-resource, all self-confidence. It may be that the strength of such temptations increases, while we seem to ourselves

capable of less and less resistance; we are aghast at the sight of our own sinfulness, and imagine that God must reject us; self-love finds no rest for sole of its foot, and scarce knows how to serve God for himself only, while so devoid of all tangible comfort. This condition will last probably until the soul learns not to think of itself, but to dwell in God alone and then, indeed, self-love is conquered. God grants a new and heavenly life to the soul which has thus died to self—it is filled with him, united to him. It loves, and is loved again—no more trouble, no more fearfulness, no more temptation. Even suffering is but a fresh stimulant to love. Such a Christian waits peacefully for death, which will but fill up the measure of perfect love. "Old things have passed away, and all things become new."

As the soul advances in holiness, God's active power within it increases, while its own action diminishes. It is our part to still our natural restlessness, and give place to his uninterrupted workings; so that day by day we may lie more passively in his hand, until our will be wholly merged in his will. It must be our chief aim, having given ourselves wholly to God, to let him take possession of all that is in us. He is wont to take all that we give him, even our very moral being and free will; yet he does but accept the offering in order to restore it to us perfected beyond all that the heart of man can conceive.

Self-interested, calculating love is not the "perfect love" which alone is worthy of God. That love knows neither limit nor measure, human prudence cannot restrain it, it reaches out to "the foolishness of the cross." That was the love wherewith Jesus loved us: and be sure that whatever we lose in this life for his sake, we shall win for all eternity; but what we deny him here, will be lost to us forever hereafter.—From *"The Hidden Life of the Soul,"* by Jean Nicholas Grou.

THE STILL HOUR.

PRAYER.

O Thou Eternal, in whose appointment my life standeth, thou hast committed to me my work; and I would commit to thee my cares. May I wait upon thy seasons, and leave myself to thee. May I feel that I am not my own, and that thou wilt heed my wants while I am intent upon thy will. May I never walk anxiously, as if my path were hid, but with a mind fixed simply upon the charge intrusted to me, and desiring nothing but the dispositions of thy provi-

dence. More and more fill me with a pity for others' trouble, which shall bring forgetfulness of my own, with the charity of them that know their own unworthiness, with the promptitude of them that dare not boast of to-morrow, and the glad hope of the children of eternity. Lead me in the straight path of simplicity and sanctity, and let neither the flatteries nor the censures of men draw me aside from it. And unto thee, the Beginning and the End, Lord of the living and Refuge of the dying, be thanks and praise for ever. Amen.—*Dr. Martineau.*

We pray against our besetting sin. But God may answer this prayer, not by removing the temptation, but by giving us more confidence in him, more sense of his pardoning love in Christ. Instead of removing the temptation, God comes and dwells with us.—*Selected.*

No prayer can go up to God from any human heart more acceptable than that which asks that the loved one may be preserved from some ensnaring temptation, from the bewildering sophistry of worldliness, which asks not outward good, but inward life, for those most dear.—*Selected.*

Every earnest purpose, every trusting prayer, brings us nearer to God. We have the evidence and witness of his being within our soul. As the shadows of night vanish with the coming dawn, so our doubt and unbelief disappear as we live from God, for man.—*Selected.*

The love and aspiration which once really existed live forever before God, and in him ye shall find the fruit thereof; that is, to all eternity it shall be better for you than if you had never felt them.—*J. Tauler.*

Be content with such things as ye have.—*Hebrews xiii. 5.*

Why should I hug life's ills with cold reserve
To cure myself and all who love me?
Nay!

A thousand things more good than I deserve
God gives me every day.

—*Celia Thaxter.*

"God loves a cheerful giver." God loves us when we are cheerful in our sacrifice; cheerful in our trial; cheerful in our loneli-

ness, bereavement, sorrow; cheerful even in our struggle with sin,—knowing that we shall come off more than conquerors through him who loved us.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking "Shall I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you have sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed here.

OFFERS.

Cambridge Branch offers the following books. Address Miss Mary A. Vinal, 20 Lowell Street, Cambridge, Mass.: "Intellectual Life," Hamerton; "Stories from Dante"; "Old England," A. J. Hare; "Venice," A. J. Hare; "Recamier's Memoirs"; "Life and Letters of Mme. Swetchine"; "Arbitration and the Hague Court," Foster; "The Model Pastor," Barron Stow, D.D.; "Sermons on Christian Consolation," A. P. Peabody; "Art of Entertaining"; "The Human Way," Willcox; "Elements of English Composition," Arnold; "Foundations of Education," Seeley; "Political Economy," Ely; "Religio Medici," Sir Thomas Browne; "Small Talk about Business"; "General Gordon's Journals"; "Europe."

Miss Caroline S. Burrage, 72 Highland Street, West Newton, Mass., offers the current numbers of *The Nation*.

The work has grown so it is no longer easy for the Book Club Secretary to care for all that pertains to the Club. The following ladies have volunteered to take charge of the different interests:

FOR BIBLES, EITHER FOR REQUESTS OR OFFERS, APPLY TO MRS. LAURA HALLETT, 37 PINCKNEY STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

FOR SCRAPS FOR PATCHWORK, FOR REQUESTS OR FOR OFFERS, TO MRS. E. H. BRIGHAM, 72 WALNUT STREET, BROOKLINE, MASS.

FOR MUSIC, FOR REQUESTS OR OFFERS, TO MRS. THOMAS LACEY, 145 GRAND VIEW AVENUE, WOLLASTON, MASS.

REQUESTS.

1. I am a girl of nineteen and live in the country where I cannot get reading matter, so should be very glad if you would list my name with the others to whom you send

books and magazines. When I have read them I will pass them on to others who will appreciate them as well as I. Address, Miss Ada B. Norton, Highlands, Macon County, Box 63, North Carolina.

2. I come again asking for reading for my children and myself. There are ten of us to enjoy reading and we should be pleased to get any kind of good books or periodicals, either new or old. I am getting the *Youth's Companion* and *Ladies' Home Journal*; but my time is out in March. I have lost the address of the lady sending them, but wish to thank her through the *Cheerful Letter*. I should like so very much to have a few numbers of *Modern Priscilla*. Many thanks for what we have received and may receive in the future. Address, Mrs. Ada V. Wann, Waxahachie, Texas, Box 127.

3. I am very anxious to receive some magazines and books through your magazine and book club, and I am not able from a financial standpoint to take magazines. I refer you to my pastor, Rev. J. E. Purcell, Steele's Tavern, Virginia. Address, Miss Grace A. Parker, Raphine, Virginia.

4. I am a farmer's daughter, age seventeen; live in a very lonely and thinly settled neighborhood; and come begging for suitable reading, especially a Bible; and I also should appreciate a song book. For reference Mr. Jimmie Roberson, Dodson, Virginia. Address, Miss Annie Eanes, Bassett, Virginia.

5. I should love to join the *Cheerful Letter* Band, and I write to ask you to please send me reading matter of any kind suitable for myself, two boys aged twenty-one and twenty-three, and girl of twelve. I should like *Good Housekeeping* if you can send it; but shall be glad of any good books or magazines. We live fifteen miles from Greensboro and in a small place that does not have a library. I should also like a correspondent. You can write Rev. N. S. Hales, Albemarle, North Carolina, or Rev. Gibbs, Gibsonville, our present pastor, who has been here since December. Mr. Hales was my pastor four years. I shall greatly appreciate getting reading and correspondent. Address, Mrs. Z. F. Persitt, Whitsett, North Carolina.

6. I get so lonely as I am unable to get out, and we live in such an out-of-the-way place, I thought I would write to the *Cheerful Letter* and ask for some good books for myself and children. I have six children.

I wrote to you some years ago and received some good reading. I enjoyed it so much. I will use every book any one will send me to help the neighborhood I live in by getting every one to read them I can. I live in a neighborhood where people do not try to have good schools; therefore we have only a short free school. I have been a sufferer from rheumatism for twelve years and at times I cannot walk; but I can walk around now and help some; but I get very lonely, as we live away back among the hills right near the Blue Ridge Mountains, eighteen miles from a railroad, with nothing to cheer one along the weary road of life. I cannot go to church in winter at all, and seldom in summer. Now, if any one has books they have already finished reading I shall be so thankful for them. I also have a little girl, Helen, thirteen years old, that would love to get cards or anything to brighten a little girl's lonely life, as she stays at home to help me. I thank God for giving me such a dear little girl. I was sick all Christmas day, and she stayed and cared for me so well. Address, Mrs. Beulah Moore, Campbell, North Carolina.

7. Mrs. S. G. Morgan, Athens, Tennessee, Route 8, asks for reading matter for her family,—husband and children from twelve to two years. They live eight miles from the nearest town and railroad, and one half mile from the public road. A Bible would be appreciated.

8. *Youth's Companion* is asked for by Mrs. J. M. Robertson, Woolwine, Virginia.

9. Mrs. Creasie Marshall, Foster Falls, Virginia, Route 1, asks for *Cheerful Letter* and *McCall's Magazine*.

10. As a new year has come I write to you again thanking you for the past reading you have sent me. I am thankful for all the reading that has been sent me during the last year. I enjoy reading the *Cheerful Letter* ever so much. I should be glad to have a Bible of large print sent me as my eye-sight has failed so I cannot read fine print. Winter is here and I like to read so well, and I have failed in health so I cannot visit but very little. I shall be forty-nine years old the fourteenth of July. I should appreciate any remembrance on that day; so will my *Cheerful Letter* friends send me more books and reading this coming year? Address, Mrs. Henry Nelson, Critz, Virginia.

11. I should dearly love to have a book by the name of "The Eyes of the World"

as I get very lonely these winter days and like to read to wear away the time. I have a sister who has two small boys and a little girl. Any books or magazines for her and children to read would be greatly appreciated. Her address is Mrs. Lelia Williams, Naola, Amherst County, Virginia. Myra Dodd, Sandidges, R. F. D. 2, Virginia.

12. Please accept my heartfelt thanks for all your kindness to me and through our *Cheerful Letter* reading club. All reading sent me reaches more than a score of homes. Interesting story books are in constant demand, and I make good use of each one sent me for my own home, and after we read it pass it on. I am asking some one to kindly send me the *American Magazine*. I should also like the *Unity* after some one is done with it. Address, Mrs. E. A. Clark, Levant, Maine.

13. Will some one please send me a fashion magazine for 1914? I should appreciate any good second-hand reading. With best wishes for the *Cheerful Letter*, I am Mrs. Fannie Thompson, Tatum, Virginia.

14. I live in the country on a farm and it is very lonely in winter. I should like to receive some good books and magazines for myself and husband; also some reading suitable for my eleven-year-old boy. Will some one please send me the *Ladies' World* and *Home Companion*? Thanking you for the reading I have received in the past, I am Mrs. John O. Goodwin, Sandidges, Virginia.

15. I am fifty-four years old and live in the country fifteen miles from the railroad station. I want to join your club and should like some good reading, and especially a Bible with large print, for I cannot see very well. Rev. O. L. Hager for reference, Sandidges, Virginia, R. F. D. 2. Address, Mrs. Joe Dodd, Sandidges, Virginia, R. F. D. 2.

16. It has been some time since I wrote you last. I am going to ask a favor of you. Will you try to get for me a book called "At the Mercy of Tiberius," by Augusta Evans Wilson? Please send me a book or two. I have six sisters and a mother who love to read. I send to them when I am through; but they always return to me as I am keeping all I get for my children to read when they are large enough to read. My two children say for you to please send them a book if you have any; girl's age twelve; boy's eight. Address, Mrs. John Henderson, Sandidges, Virginia.

17. I want to come and thank all of the dear *Cheerful Letter* friends who so kindly remembered me with cheering letters and good reading. When I am alone it helps to pass away so many lonely hours, as my only son has been married just over a year and I have no one now to look for; so I hope I may be remembered on my birthday, February 22. Address, Mrs. M. J. Hall, Sandy Ridge, R. F. D. Box 45, North Carolina.

18. I am a little girl of twelve years of age. Am the oldest at home to help mamma. I go to school most every day. I am striving for an education. I should be so very glad if some one of the *Cheerful Letter* friends would send me some good reading for myself, and I should like to have a correspondent of my age. Address, Miss Carrie Riggs, Sandy Ridge, North Carolina.

19. Please accept my sincere thanks for the *Cheerful Letter*. It is always a welcome visitor in our home. Will you please send me *The Woman's Home Companion*, and the *Girl's Companion* for my little ten-year-old girl, and *The Boy's World* for my little seven-year-old boy? Address, Mrs. Carrie James, Oakboro, North Carolina.

20. Miss Ethel Horne, Morven, North Carolina, Route 2, Box 82, asks for the *Cheerful Letter* and scraps for patchwork.

21. Mrs. Mary Witt, Ironsburg, Tennessee, will be glad of reading for herself and husband.

22. Mrs. T. A. Robertson, Elamsville, Virginia, is now very lonely, her husband having died in the summer. She will be very thankful for any cheer.

23. Mrs. W. H. Smith, Capitol Hill, Oklahoma, writes: I am a stranger in this part of the country so haven't made connections with any church as yet; but can give as reference my mother-in-law, Mrs. Lizzie Smith, Mountain View, Oklahoma, and Mrs. H. E. Russell, Binger, Oklahoma. I should be glad to get any of the monthly magazines or late novels, and *The Ladies' Home Journal* and *Youth's Companion* will be especially welcome. I am thanking you in advance for your kindness and assure you that any literature sent to me will be passed on to other needy ones.

24. Mrs. May D. Jones, Palms, California, R. R. 1, Box 247, would very much appreciate receiving the magazine, *The Country Gentleman*.

25. Mrs. E. M. Backus, 633 Third Street, North, St. Petersburg, Florida, wishes to tell the lady who sent her the *Atlantic Monthly* how much she appreciates it, but has lost the address of the sender and could not write to thank her. She will be very glad to receive the magazine regularly.

26. Mrs. J. H. Crist, Schuyler, Virginia, wishes to sincerely thank her many friends for reading matter sent us for nearly a year, especially *The Cheerful Letter*. Will they please continue sending? I have passed some on. God bless *The Cheerful Letter*!

CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

The *Cheerful Letter* sent to J. P. Hill, care of C. W. Ball, Granby, Mass., is unclaimed. Will the person sending please notice?

Mrs. Ida M. Wann is now at Waxahachie, Texas.

Mrs. Arthur J. Smith is now at Belfast, Maine, R. F. D. 1.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH THE MOTHERS?

There are mothers, real mothers, who are training their children to be obedient, courteous, unselfish—and consequently happy—and these children make home a joy and school a comfort; but there are other mothers who are training their children to be disobedient, discourteous, selfish—and consequently unhappy—and these children make home a discord and school a trial.

If people only knew it takes but a short time to find out what the home life is, for children are thoughtlessly honest and give their training away without the slightest effort. "Actions speak louder than words" almost every time. No questions are necessary—indeed, it's quite the reverse, for teachers constantly have to restrain children from reporting too fluently on home affairs.

"Mother's pet" is a by-product of home training unfavorably received everywhere. Of course "pet" is a son, and if he is favored with that meek and well-known angelic expression most teachers know enough to put him in the front seat and keep an eye on him, for while "safety first" is her motto "watchful waiting" is his. Mother devotes an hour or two daily to drilling his lessons into him, and if he fails (in consequence) and has to work out something for himself in school he is soothed and rewarded at home.

The old-time fatherly prescription, "If you're punished at school I shall punish you when you get home," is reversed by mother's "If you're punished at school I shall reprove the teacher—and take you to the movies."

The mother who took her small son to the funeral of a neighbor, even to the services at the cemetery, might have been surprised at her reported prowess had she heard him the next morning describe the burial to his teacher, closing with "She couldn't do that to my mother, she'd scratch out!"

It was amusing the other day to watch a group of kindergartners as they stood in their circle singing and playing their little games. "Mother's pet" was there, and when the teacher answered a call at the door he snatched the head of the boy next him and held his victim firmly down to the floor while he turned that angelic countenance toward the teacher's back, looking the picture of innocence. It's that look that works havoc with his mother when he's been particularly disobedient, for she sees an early death beneath that angel smile and punishment would hasten the day.

There are mothers who, finding discipline at home difficult to sustain, expect training in all directions to be accomplished at school. "I can't make my children mind, but what are teachers for?" asked a woman whose son had been returned to her by a policeman because the boy had committed some misdemeanor on the way home. "The teachers ought to go home with their scholars and see they don't get into mischief," she continued, regardless of the fact that to escort every child home, when there are forty-five children, would take considerable time and strength. She is the kind of mother referred to by a clergyman a few Sundays ago as "teaching her children nothing at home, but sending them to school, where everything is taught from mince pie to manners."

"Please come here, Frank," implored a young mother when her five-year-old son raced across the street. "Won't you please come back?" But as Frank continued to dance on the opposite sidewalk she called, "When you go to school you'll have to mind. Miss Blank will make you." In a short time Frank was taken to school, and on leaving him his mother gave this parting shot: "You'll have to be a good boy now, Frank, for Miss Blank doesn't like naughty children." The boy stood for a minute beside the desk assigned him and then, with clenched fists and quivering lips, he said with the greatest deliberation: "I could tear up

all those desks, I could throw over all these chairs, I could pull down these walls, I could kill everybody." Miss Blank, sensible and sympathetic, said gently, as she put her arm across his shoulders, "Well, you won't, will you, Frank?" At the quiet words and tone the boy threw himself on the desk and burst into sobs that shook his small body from head to foot. The unexpected had happened. How could any mother so misguide a little child dependent upon her for impressions? Frank was a perfectly good boy in school because Miss Blank understood children and helped him get self-control, but his mother—well!—

Some few years ago a woman brought her overgrown daughter to school, and after explaining at some length that the girl was behind in her studies because other teachers had neglected their duty, she said: "I want you to give all your attention to my daughter. I want her to be taught to read well, to spell correctly, to make a good appearance." "But," interrupted the teacher, "what of my other scholars? I can't give all my attention to one pupil."

"They've had your instruction for three months and can be left to themselves a bit, but my Mary has been fearfully neglected," answered the mother. "And another thing," she added, "Mary hates arithmetic so I've decided that all I care about is to have her know enough to make change."—Poor Mary! It evidently didn't occur to the mother that she might, to advantage, give a little attention to Mary at home.

The excuses sent by mothers would form an interesting assortment. Some children are to be dismissed half an hour early because of dancing lessons; others, to go to a *matinée*.—Some are late because they were at a party the evening before—or at a moving picture show—or for forty other reasons—and must be excused.

And speaking of the movies—when women take to the movies children who are too young to go to school, who can wonder that when they get there they find the routine of school life "flat, stale, and unprofitable"?—I know of a mother who, two evenings a week, takes her four-year-old son to the movies, though I fancy there are few reels that are suitable for his young eyes. We can guess the result.

What is the matter with the mothers? Are they altogether thoughtless of their great responsibilities? It takes infinite thought, time, and patience to guide a child aright—but it is certainly worth the price.—*Julia E. Deane, in the Boston Sunday Herald.*

NATURAL HISTORY.

STUDYING THE BIRDS IN WINTER.

Winter makes bird study an easy matter. The perplexities of the autumn migration with the scores of species passing through from the north, the young birds in their peculiar attire, the old ones in the drabs and browns that some affect for winter wear in place of their vivid summer plumage, are gone on. The good old standbys, all-year friends, remain and are recognized without much difficulty. Moreover, the cold and snow tend to make them more friendly and familiar than in summer.

The chickadee may have refused our proffered nesting-box in May and taken his bride to the birches of the wood-margin and there fed and educated the family. But in December he is pretty sure to bring them to the garden, foraging among the sunflower and chicory planted there for him. The family will explore the trees for insect larvæ and eggs and remembered store of suet hung there last winter. With them will, no doubt, appear the white-breasted nuthatches, curious acrobats of the bird world, the downy woodpeckers, and the brown creepers. They seek similar food on the same trees, and often one may note the distinct and invariable characteristics of the different birds at the same time. The chickadees flit from twig to twig, head up or head down as the need occurs, careless of attitude. Not so the woodpeckers. They may be capricious of movement, but their perch is always in the most correct form, upright, head back, tail down. Most methodical of all is the prim little brown creeper. He alights at the foot of the tree, works primly upward, and swings a swift parabola from near the top to the base of the next one.

And then comes along the nuthatch, and reverses the brown creeper's action. He alights near the top of the tree and "yank yanks" himself downward. The chickadee does not object to being upside down, but the nuthatch insists on it. If a limb is to be explored he goes to the tip of it and works toward the trunk. But when he finds a chestnut, then is the time he shows this characteristic most prominently. The nuthatch deserves his name. Hatch is early English for chop, and he knows how to chop nuts open. When the crop is good, chestnuts may be found on the ground beneath the trees all winter.

It is fun to watch a nuthatch at work on one of these. He will eye the ground from his upside-down perch on the tree-trunk much as a squirrel does and run down in

quite the same way to pick up the big brown nut in his slender bill. Then he goes back to the tree and finds a V-shaped corrugation in the bark which will hold the nut—his chopping block. Then he proceeds to "hatch" it. You might not think that slender bill had much chopping edge, or the little gray-blue, black and white bird much chopping power, but there is no chestnut that can withstand the nuthatch. The nut may leap from the block a dozen times. He'll run down and get it again, placing it in the same groove, and in the end he'll split his way through the tough rind and get at the delicious meat within.

One winter day I watched one do this. It took him half an hour to get at his luncheon. Then he feasted royally. And then he turned a joyous handspring to the topmost twig of the tall tree and went to bed. The nuthatch, like most hole-nesting birds, seeks a hole in a tree or a nesting-box for shelter through the long, bitter winter nights. But this was merely an after-dinner nap, and the bird took it in the most curious way. He hung himself head downward by one claw, fluffed out his feathers till he looked not at all like a bird, and hung there for thirty minutes. So far as I could make out with the bird glass he was fast asleep. His curious attitude probably made for safety, for he looked far more like a brown-tail moth nest or a tangled fluff of plant-down than like a bird. By and by he waked up, tasted the remnant of his feast, turned up his nose at it, and went handspringing off to another tree. The nuthatch is the goblin acrobat of the winter woods, and his ways are a constant source of joy to the watcher.

The blue jay and crow are free-booters, none too well liked by the smaller birds and for good reason. The crow thrives in the midst of civilization, but long remembers man's enmity and keeps well out of gunshot in most times and places. But the jay—saucy rascal—comes to the house and jeers at us. He may build a nest on a bough near your window edge and repay your tolerance by eating the eggs of the song-sparrow in the nest in the shrubbery by the front door. The jay is a bold, bad bird and ought to be kept in the depths of the wood where he belongs and where he has his uses. But in winter the small birds are safe, and we are apt to admire his saucy ways and his handsome plumage and welcome him to the feeding-station. He will come to the window itself if you encourage him. In return you will do well to keep the suet well tied down or he will fly away with the whole lump.

You may not know the goldfinches when

they come for the hemp and sunflower seeds which most people put out for them, at least not at first glimpse, for the goldfinch has lost much of his gold with the passing of summer. The black is still conspicuous on his cap, wings, and tail, but only a little of the yellow glows through the drab and brown of his lesser feathers. He is the same sprightly chap, however, and twitters merrily as he feeds, showing the way to the siskins which often flock with his clan. The goldfinches love chicory seeds, and a garden plot full of these blue-eyed perennials will be golden with goldfinches as long as the seed lasts.

Yet, whatever the changes of plumage and habits are, our all-year birds are quite easily recognized, and with them the amateur bird student soon becomes familiar. When the cold has come to stay and the real winter is upon us he who hunts with an opera-glass may yet find bird wonders waiting for him in field and wood, for the cold and diminishing food supply often send birds of the far north to us. The snowy owl and the white gyrfalcon may sweep on broad pinions over the snowy wastes, bringing a touch of arctic weirdness to the scene. The northern shrike may hang a meadow mouse in his improvised larder in the thorn hedge, for all these are occasional winter visitants.

More likely to be seen, however, and indeed more welcome, are the pine grosbeaks. Something of the aurora has touched these sleek birds of the north, and they slip along the snow suffused with tints of dawn. Sleek and demure as kittens they are and often without fear of man, almost allowing him to pick them up. Evening grosbeaks—chance visitors from the far northwest—may come, and siskins, redpolls, juncoes, and tree-sparrows are to be expected.

The best way to study these birds is to tramp the fields and find them. The hunting spirit is strong in us all, and it is a far greater joy to stalk wild creatures when we may bag them with opera-glass and notebook, yet leave them wild and free as ever. The zest of exercise in the keen winter air is payment enough even if the bag is small. But, one may go still-hunting as well. It is a fine charity to put out constant supplies of food for the wintering birds, and one may attract them to the door by doing it and observe and photograph them from the warmth and comfort of the house.

To feed the birds in winter is a simple matter. To feed them well is a fine art. Crumbs from the table, scraps of meat or suet from the larder, chaff from the haymow, all will serve, yet certain special foods are especially attractive. The chickadees love

sunflower seed as well as suet, and the nut-hatches will hatch them on angled bark chopping-blocks as readily as they will chestnuts. The juncoes and tree-sparrows love hemp-seed, and nut meats attract them all. When the snow is deep "chicken grit" is eagerly sought. All birds must have gravel for their crops' sake, and the ice and snow give them scant opportunity to get it. These, with wheat, buckwheat, milo-maize, and kaffir corn mixed in the right proportions, make a very attractive food for the winter birds, and the pleasure of watching them eat it is well worth the expense and trouble of providing it.—*Winthrop Packard, in "Our Dumb Animals."*

CHILDREN'S CLASSICS.

THE GOLDEN TOUCH.

(Continued from last number.)

Whether Midas slept as usual that night the story does not say. Asleep or awake, however, his mind was probably in the state of a child's to whom a beautiful new plaything has been promised in the morning. At any rate, day had hardly peeped over the hills when King Midas was broad awake, and stretching his arms out of bed, began to touch the objects that were within reach. He was anxious to prove whether the Golden Touch had really come, according to the stranger's promise. So he laid his finger on a chair by the bedside and on various things, but was grievously disappointed to perceive that they remained of exactly the same substance as before. Indeed, he felt very much afraid that he had only dreamed about the lustrous stranger, or else that the latter had been making game of him. And what a miserable affair would it be if, after all his hopes, Midas must content himself with what little gold he could scrape together by ordinary means instead of creating it by a touch.

All this while it was only the gray of the morning, with but a streak of brightness along the edge of the sky, where Midas could not see it. He lay in a very disconsolate mood, regretting the downfall of his hopes, and kept growing sadder until the earliest sunbeam shone through the window and gilded the ceiling over his head. It seemed to Midas that this bright yellow sunbeam was reflected in rather a singular way on the white covering of the bed. Looking more closely, what was his astonishment and delight when he found that this linen fabric had been transmuted to what seemed a

woven texture of the purest and brightest gold! The Golden Touch had come to him with the first sunbeam!

Midas started up in a kind of joyful frenzy, and ran about the room grasping at everything that happened to be in his way. He seized one of the bed-posts, and it became immediately a fluted golden pillar. He pulled aside a window-curtain in order to admit a clear spectacle of the wonders which he was performing, and the tassel grew heavy in his hand—a mass of gold. He took up a book from the table. At his first touch it assumed the appearance of such a splendidly bound and gilt-edge volume as one often meets with nowadays, but on running his fingers through the leaves, behold! it was a bundle of thin golden plates in which all the wisdom of the book had grown illegible. He hurriedly put on his clothes, and was enraptured to see himself in a magnificent suit of gold cloth, which retained its flexibility and softness, although it burdened him a little with its weight. He drew out his handkerchief, which little Marygold had hemmed for him. That was likewise gold, with the dear child's neat and pretty stitches running all along the border in gold thread!

Somehow or other, this last transformation did not quite please King Midas. He would rather that his little daughter's handiwork should have remained just the same as when she climbed his knee and put it into his hand.

But it was not worth while to vex himself about a trifle. Midas now took his spectacles from his pocket, and put them on his nose in order that he might see more distinctly what he was about. In those days spectacles for common people had not been invented, but were already worn by kings, else how could Midas have any? To his great perplexity, however, excellent as the glasses were, he discovered that he could not possibly see through them. But this was the most natural thing in the world, for on taking them off the transparent crystals turned out to be plates of yellow metal, and of course were worthless as spectacles, though valuable as gold. It struck Midas as rather inconvenient that with all his wealth, he could never again be rich enough to own a pair of serviceable spectacles.

"It is no great matter, nevertheless," said he to himself, very philosophically. "We cannot expect any great good without its being accompanied with some small inconvenience. The Golden Touch is worth the sacrifice of a pair of spectacles at least, if not of one's very eyesight. My own eyes will serve for ordinary purposes, and my little

Marygold will soon be old enough to read to me."

Wise King Midas was so exalted by his good fortune that the palace seemed not sufficiently spacious to contain him. He therefore went down stairs and smiled on observing that the balustrade of the staircase became a bar of burnished gold as his hand passed over it in his descent.

He lifted the door-latch (it was brass only a moment ago, but golden when his fingers quitted it) and emerged into the garden. Here, as it happened, he found a great number of beautiful roses in full bloom and others in all the stages of lovely bud and blossom. Very delicious was their fragrance in the morning breeze. Their delicate blush was one of the fairest sights in the world, so gentle, so modest, and so full of sweet tranquillity did these roses seem to be.

But Midas knew a way to make them far more precious, according to his way of thinking, than roses had ever been before. So he took great pains in going from bush to bush and exercised his magic touch most indefatigably, until every individual flower and bud, and even the worms at the heart of some of them, were changed to gold. By the time this good work was completed King Midas was summoned to breakfast, and, as the morning air had given him an excellent appetite, he made haste back to the palace.

What was usually a king's breakfast in the days of Midas I really do not know and cannot stop now to investigate. To the best of my belief, however, on this particular morning the breakfast consisted of hot cakes, some nice little brook trout, roasted potatoes, fresh boiled eggs, and coffee for King Midas himself, and a bowl of bread and milk for his daughter Marygold. At all events, this is a breakfast fit to set before a king, and, whether he had it or not, King Midas could not have had a better.

Little Marygold had not yet made her appearance. Her father ordered her to be called, and, seating himself at table, awaited the child's coming in order to begin his own breakfast. To do Midas justice he really loved his daughter, and loved her so much the more this morning on account of the good fortune which had befallen him. It was not a great while before he heard her coming along the passageway crying bitterly. This circumstance surprised him, because Marygold was one of the cheerfulest little people whom you would see in a summer's day, and hardly shed a thimbleful of tears in a twelvemonth. When Midas heard her sobs he determined to put little Marygold into better spirits by an agreeable surprise; so, leaning across

the table, he touched his daughter's bowl (which was a china one with pretty figures all around it) and transmuted it to gleaming gold.

Meanwhile, Marygold slowly and disconsolately opened the door and showed herself with her apron at her eyes, still sobbing as if her heart would break.

"How now, my little lady!" cried Midas. "Pray what is the matter with you this bright morning?"

Marygold, without taking the apron from her eyes, held out her hand in which was one of the roses which Midas had so recently transmuted.

"Beautiful!" exclaimed her father. "And what is there in this magnificent golden rose to make you cry?"

"Ah, dear father," answered the child, as well as her sobs would let her, "it is not beautiful, but the ugliest flower that ever grew. As soon as I was dressed I ran into the garden to gather some roses for you, because I know you like them, and like them the better when gathered by your little daughter. But—oh dear, dear me—what do you think has happened?"—*Nathaniel Hawthorne*, in "*The Wonder Book*."

(To be continued.)

THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Address everything relating to the Amusement Column to Mr. Henry A. Jenks, 45 Spring Lane, Canton, Mass. Contributors are requested to write on one side of the paper only. Write name and address plainly (not necessarily for publication) and send the answers to the puzzles on a separate slip of paper.]

I.

WELL-KNOWN WORKS OF FICTION.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Now tell time. | 14. Sugar rill velvets. |
| 2. Snow is in fair symbols. | 15. He sent me cow. |
| 3. Dip paddle for vice. | 16. Neat one over mot-tled. |
| 4. Ride! Fly! Fetch her foe. | 17. Gun in Germany. |
| 5. Where two wild died. | 18. Aunt minds a dinner. |
| 6. Rest more, rebel. | 19. Whet a sword. |
| 7. Alice forked what five? | 20. Ride, sly mail. |
| 8. Our corn is bones. | 21. A hen hath slow gum. |
| 9. I fry in a vat. | 22. John Grey wired, |
| 10. Unavailing rapid. | 23. Hold him a fine hot treat. |
| 11. The owl rink. | 24. L. L., that tree secret. |
| 12. O! claim cent buns. | 25. I seen stone mitten. |
| 13. Carols are for beehive. | 26. He quoted third cake. |
| | 27. I lash Ben's bee. |

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|----------------------------------|--|
| 28. We have ten to Charles. | 39. A stew turned over my sofa. |
| 29. Too! hen music for hot cent. | 40. A hat spoiled my soft pie. |
| 30. His cry black linen. | 41. How Ed got yeast beer. |
| 31. Add one red nail. | 42. On lone road. |
| 32. He steals no match if hot. | 43. I knock a glad brow. |
| 33. Her lame bat fun. | 44. Anna bit his rag. |
| 34. Bad tones in a corn. | 45. O Jim, read war! |
| 35. Porter's girl hems pigs. | 46. My Carl dons snow boots. |
| 36. Fry until tell-tale door. | 47. Do salt eaglet now. |
| 37. Hannah, mix flag Joe lent. | 48. Ben ran shirk. |
| 38. Raw shadow used fat. | 49. Bare white beats. |
| | 50. Tell Susan I never dance in odd war. |

—*Good Housekeeping*.

II.

QUESTIONS IN HISTORY.

1. What English King was a hero of Holland?
2. What great Flemish hero, born about 1539, was a brewer's son?
3. What hero of our Revolutionary War was executed as a spy by the British?

—*Selected*.

III.

ORIGINAL ARITHMETIC.

Example: What number becomes even by subtracting one? *Answer:* Seven.

1. What number by adding one becomes sound?
2. What number by adding one becomes isolated?
3. What number by inserting one becomes finely ground meal?
4. What number by subtracting one becomes a vegetable growth?
5. What number by subtracting one becomes a preposition?
6. What number by subtracting one becomes an exclamation?

—*Every Other Sunday*.

Answers to puzzles in February number.

I. ACROSTIC.—

WELLINGTON
SADDLEBACK
WESTPHALIA
PYTHAGORAS
HUNTINGTON
STONINGTON
WILMINGTON
GLOUCESTER
RAVENSWOOD
MATTERHORN

II. ENIGMA.—St. Valentine's Day.

III. INITIAL LETTER PUZZLE.—Lincoln.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged—not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort—by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

Any minister (of any sect) who receives this paper is cordially invited to distribute the copies of the *Cheerful Letter* received among lonely members of his parish, shut-ins, or invalids of whom he may know. He is also invited to write to our headquarters (see address on this page) and give names and addresses of those who may be cheered and helped by becoming our correspondents.

No *theology* is disseminated in our paper. All the religious matter is intended merely to strengthen, cheer, and comfort those in need of such practical help.

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The work has grown so it is no longer easy for the Book Club Secretary to care for all that pertains to the Club. The following ladies have volunteered to take charge of the different interests: For Bibles, either for requests or offers, apply to Mrs. Laura Hallett, 37 Pinckney Street, Boston, Mass. For scraps for patchwork, for requests or offers, to Mrs. E. H. Brigham, 72 Walnut Street, Brookline, Mass. For music, for requests or offers, to Mrs. Thomas Lacey, 145 Grand View Avenue, Wollaston, Mass.

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The name of any person who fails to obey this rule will be dropped from our list. Any worker receiving such a request should send the letter at once to headquarters.

The Chairman, Mrs. George G. Saville, is at the rooms, 25 Beacon Street, on Thursday afternoons, from 2 until 4.30 P.M.

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Chairman of Cheerful Letter Exchange, Mrs. George G. Saville, 33 Saville Ave., Quincy, Mass.

Editor of "The Cheerful Letter," Miss L. Freeman Clarke.

Book Club Secretary, Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass.